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Stone, Mary

THE
DIVERSE
LIVES

OF
TWO
CHINESE
GIRLS

BY
MRS.
J.
HAL
SMITH



DR. MARY STONE
(Dr. Maiyu)

The Diverse Lives of Two Chinese Girls

Mrs. J. Hal Smith

Two baby girls were born in the self same year in the old country of China—China, where baby girls are not so welcome as in Christian countries. One came to the home of a Chinese official, Mr. Yu, and they named her Kuliang. The other came to the Methodist parsonage and the good Chinese pastor and his wife, having learned to value baby girls, named their little daughter Maiyu (Beautiful Gem).

The age-old custom in China is to bind the feet of all baby girls, but Maiyu's Christian parents said, "We shall let the feet of our child grow naturally." So Maiyu was the first little girl of good family in all Central China that grew up with unbound feet. But she suffered cruel ridicule for this. Children and sometimes older people made great fun of her large feet.

Maiyu was early taught of God and became a Christian. One day her mother dressed her in her pretty little red trousers and neat "sham" and her father took her to the American Missionary doctor who lived in the city and said, "I want you to make a doctor out of my Maiyu." So Maiyu was placed in the mission school for training and given the name of Mary Stone. Completing the work in the schools of her home city, she was sent to America and took her

college course in the University of Michigan. Later, she had special medical training in the Johns Hopkins University of Baltimore, Maryland. Returning to China, she gave herself to service in Kukiang, her native city, and soon became famous both for her medical and Christian work.

What was Yu Kuliang, the other little girl doing all this time? Her father died while she was yet an infant. The mother was almost beside herself with grief. "I am left a widow without a son," she said. "I have only a daughter. What hope is there in life for me?" She sought the temples, desiring to consecrate herself and her daughter to a holy life, but discovered to her bewilderment and pain that the priests and temple women were not living the holy lives she had supposed. Sick at heart, she quit the temples and built her own little temple near the city wall at Kukiang. She cherished with care all the family idols and purchased more. An upper room was consecrated as a little "Sanctum Sanctorium," and here she bestowed the idols. Finally Mrs. Yu persuaded a friend to plead her case before the emperor of China, telling him she was the widow of an official, and, being left alone with her daughter, desired to live a holy life, with no one to molest them. The emperor granted them his grace and memorialized the place, signing the document with his name and sealing it with his seal. This secured the place from invasion. The temple home was labelled the *Hall of Purity*. No man ever visited the place and the inmates never went out. As Kuliang grew up, she never saw anybody except her mother and her religious teachers. From early childhood she was a devout worshipper of the gods. Being an apt student, she had read the books of Tao-

ism, Buddhism and Confucianism quite through, while yet in her early teens. On attaining the age of sixteen years, she was ready to enter upon the life of desperate devotion which had been planned for her and, accordingly, she was taken to the upper room and solemnly consecrated to the gods and locked in the room with them. Here she stayed for three years, without seeing the face of any living being, not even that of her own mother. Food was placed where she could get it. She spent much time kneeling before the idols, seeking from them some sign or revelation. Constantly she kept three sticks of incense burning before them—one for Taoism, one for Buddhism and one for Confucianism—she would include all three to be sure and make no mistake. The three years finally closed and she was released and given the freedom of the whole house for a single year and association with her mother and teachers. Then a second time she was locked into the idols' cell for three years and again was given a year of freedom. A third time she kept her vigil of three years and came out for a year. Yet a fourth time she went to her lonely watch of three long years with the idols. The idols alone were her companions. She lived with them; she ate and drank before them; she slept in their presence; she knelt before them until her calloused knees had worn deep holes into the floor. In her importunate seeking for some sign or token from the objects of her worship, she cut away pieces of her flesh to offer in sacrifice, until her body was covered with dreadful scars. At the close of the fourth period of years, she came out of the cell so thin, and pale, and emaciated that the mother feared she would die.

A doctor was needed but a man could not be admitted to the Hall of Purity. The fame of Mary Stone had reached their ears. They knew she had been educated in America and was now a celebrated lady doctor in their own city. She was the one they would ask to come and help them. Never before had Mary Stone entered this dwelling. She did not know who lived there. Gladly she responded to their call of need, and then for the first she learned the shocking truth that these two women were her long lost cousins. Kuliang was thirty-two, exactly her own age. The years of solitary life had robbed the girl of clear speech. She could speak only a thick-tongued language. She had grown partially deaf, but she had a beautiful face. Her whole soul was in it. Mary Stone's Christian heart went out in tender sympathy for her poor cousins and while she fought a desperate fight with death, she told them the old sweet story of a Saviour's love. Little by little she convinced them that the idols were but figures of wood and could give no help. Day after day she read to them from the Bible and told them it was wrong to worship idols. Almost every night the busy little doctor found time to visit the Hall of Purity and sometimes took a missionary friend along with her.

Gradually the blind eyes were opened and at last the weary hearts yielded themselves to the embrace of Jesus Christ. Then one day, these "holy women," inspired by their new faith and assisted by "Cousin Mary," dragged the idols from the upper room, cut them to pieces and committed them to the flames. That night as Dr. Stone sat by Kuliang's side, she said, "This is the first night I can re-

member in my whole life that I have slept without the idols, but I do not mind. I have found peace, sweet peace at last." The mother said, "We have studied Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. We know them through and through and all they have to give. We have followed them with desperate earnestness and ceaseless devotion, but they cannot bring peace to the heart. All my life I sought for truth and could not find it, but at last the light has broken. We have found Jesus and He has brought us peace."

Kuliang rallied for awhile and was able to walk about the city streets. She had never seen people enough to know the proper kind of clothes to wear. She usually wore a priest's gown. She visited Mary Stone's fine hospital and was deeply impressed with what she saw there. She delighted to be with her cousin, and, as they walked the streets together, wanted to hold her hand. This was rather embarrassing to Dr. Stone and she said to Kuliang, "You are dressed in a man's robe. Perhaps you had better not take my hand, for everybody knows me and they might think I am going about in public hand in hand with a man."

Dr. Stone did her best for Kuliang, but the strain of those years in solitude had been too much for the frail body. She grew weaker and weaker and finally passed away. Her dying testimony, whispered to her mother and Dr. Mary, was, "I have lived long with the idols. I have tried them all. They do not satisfy. Now my heart is satisfied with Jesus! He gives me peace!" The body, clad in some of Dr. Mary's garments, was buried with a Christian funeral. No incense was burned above the grave. At evening time she had found

the light and peace such as Christ gives at the last to weary hearts.

The above was related to me by Dr. Mary Stone herself one evening as we sat at the dinner table in her present home in Shanghai. The memory of her poor cousin helps to increase the little Doctor's zeal in making Christ known to other women of China. She is a faithful steward. Thousands of girls in China need the peace that Dr. Stone's message brought to her cousin. Let us spread The Good News.

The Women's Missionary Association
The United Brethren in Christ
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Price 3 Cents.